1-1-1994

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Abstract

This paper seeks to paint a picture of how discernible links between Althusser and Foucault can assist us to theorise the life of cultural subjects inside established and emergent liberal-capitalist states. Althusser's querying of a humanistic foundation to political philosophy and the social contract is connected to Foucault's contention that modernity invented the subject as a centre of inquiry and that centre became the site constructing obedient citizens.

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Civic Culture

By the nineteenth century, notions of civility, of how to be a citizen, are widespread in Western Europe. They inhabit civil society, what Foucault named "the great fantasy . . . of a social body constituted by the universality of wills" ("Body/Power" 55). Civil society lies beyond the family, clan or area but short of the state. Its institutions animate the economy, religion, intellectual life and political parties (but not the parliament or executive government). They are linked via a mutual understanding of civil manners. The civil subject exists within this space.

In the late twentieth century, there is renewed interest in identifying the networks that make for the civility that organizes this society. The motivation for such a turn comes from two sources. Firstly, it is a response by Western intellectuals and policy-makers to the chaos of life in Western economies and, in particular, Western cities. Secondly, it is a response by Eastern and Western intellectuals and policy-makers to new constitutional and economic arrangements in Eastern and Central Europe, a search for new spaces to influence public policy from outside the state (Taylor 95-96 and Elkin 163-66).

The meaning of this desired/designed civility has shifted over time. Consider changes in the field of development studies, which emerged alongside decolonization to render the Third World modern. Development studies placed their faith in devastatingly self-referential forms of knowledge which are now in question. It is no longer sustainable to seek to replicate a "correct," Anglo-American model in places unfortunate enough to be "elsewhere." Andreas Huyssen maintains that one of the key distinctions between the modern and the postmodern is the new relationship between the West and the Third World, a new relationship that is one of respect rather than control, of difference in place of hierarchy (615-16). Centralization, modernization and industrialization—in fact, development itself—are problematized by dispersal, fragmentation and the aesthetic. There is no centre providing the criteria by which others are judged up-to-date (Bauman 799-800 and Folch-Serra 66-67). Under postmodernity, for example, European historiography confronts the challenge that "the history of this appendage to the

Eurasian continent is no longer world history.'' Its accounts of an industrial proletariat, of the emergence of reason, of the centrality of the West, are of ''local importance'' (Ankersmit 150). Max Weber's argument that the West developed in terms of a ''rational potential'' which is of the essence of human existence may now be seen to refer to specific rationalities inscribed in culturally particular technologies of the subject; the universalisms of modernity have been supplanted by the localisms of the postmodern, ironic reactions to globalized cultural forms (Hindess 124). While some resuscitated liberal tropes maintain an individualistic basis in citizenship, communitarian political philosophy emphasizes collective participation. But as Chantal Mouffe insists, this collectivity must equally be recognized for the proliferation of publics that constitute it, publics that were denied by the Enlightenment's effortless ethnocentric and androcentric extrapolations from an ''undifferentiated concept of 'man.'''(29-30 and Fraser 66-67). For Étienne Balibar, though, critical questions remain unanswered follow-ing the installation of the subject by Descartes and Kant into the heart of social and cultural theory: can human subjection be ended by the advent of the citizen? Did the rupturous events of 1789 and 1989 represent a genuine break with domination, a departure from eras of absolutism that brought with it the desire and the capacity to understand and influence events of government (''Citizen Subject'' 39-41)?

Or put another way, do the foundational innovations of modernity offer universally applicable techniques of freedom and being? For despite the changes noted above, the West's ''local'' history clearly continues to be made the centre of many political and cultural typologies. This much is evident from the resilience of doctrines of civil society. More than a century ago, Lord Acton defined the task of civil society as ''the establishment of liberty for the realization of moral duties'' (Dalberg-Acton 298). Compare that with Michael Walzer's argument that ''[t]he words 'civil society' mean the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks—formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology—that fill this space'' (293). The latter is essentially a pluralized, institutional specification of the former.

This raises a further series of questions about what Althusser calls the ''*problem of origins*'' (''Montesquieu'' 25). Which came first: the state legitimized by a mythic social contract between state and citizenry, or the public forming that citizenry? Can a public exist without a state? When does a citizen become a citizen? What is ''the nature of the act by which a people is a people?''(''Rousseau'' 125). These questions are especially important at a moment when constitutional and economic adjustments are underway in states that have, perhaps for the first time,

been exposed to the workings of civil society and when those states, which have long enjoyed all these systems, are unable to combine them with a general public goodwill.

To return, then, to Balibar's concerns about subjection, we might halt for a moment and consider how that process works within citizenship and how citizenship relates to the broader patterns of cultural life. Rather than being a point in past time that can be isolated, the "primordial moment" that "has made a people a people . . . is the always contemporary 'moment,'" contemporary for Althusser because it is always being re-invented in accordance with the enunciation of an object termed the "general interest" by the state. This enunciative form relies on a mythic "general will" for its legitimacy and pretends that the latter preceded it (Althusser, "Rousseau" 148).

Althusser argues that the "category of the citizen realizes the *synthesis of the State* in man himself: the citizen is the State in the private man" ("Montesquieu" 62). This is the technology that ensures subjects see themselves—and willingly—as such by producing a "disposition" on their part. They do not so much *accept* the imposition of a particular form of government as actively *embrace* it as a collective expression of themselves (despite the fact that this expression derived from preconditions for knowledge set by the state). Virtue is defined as "the passion for the general" under democracy in a way that derives from self-regard. Self and society are merged (Althusser, "Montesquieu" 45 and 80). Citizenship involves membership in a community and therefore political participation in the running of that community. This implies a doctrine of rights that are granted on a broadly based, social level but, paradoxically, actually operate individually in such areas as freedom of association, speech, information, and personal liaison (Held 20-21). These rights are granted by a state which also polices their exercise through the doctrine of *e pluribus unum*. In the words of Alain Touraine, this doctrine requires the citizen to forge a direct link between "the defence of his ideas and interests and the laws or political decisions providing the basic framework for public life" (260-61). It is to Foucault that we should turn for the micropolitics of this identification.

For Foucault, the special feature of the development of government in the West has been its deployment of "pastoral power" modelled on the Christian church. This power has four qualities. Firstly, it promises an ultimate salvation. Secondly, it denies any needs of its own other than to serve. Thirdly, it undertakes to care for both the collective and the singular self. And finally, it demands an intimacy with those under its care. It must know them if it is to direct them. This knowledge must be absolute, its computation a critical production of the truth of the person,

a truth that can only be known inside this mode of subjection. No longer ecclesiastical, this power has multiplied as it has dispersed over the centuries into a "modern matrix of individualization[:] . . . the state" ("The Subject" 782-83). The notion of a legitimacy attached to both private and public opinion founded on individual rationality best expresses and codifies those ideas of natural rights which become the mechanism binding the subject to the state (Wagner and Zipprian 57). The social contract is a myth enabling not class domination, but a system of integrating the activities of governing. It provides the link between the state's model of governance (the family) and its model of legitimacy (sovereignty), a means of combining managerial efficacy with legality. These two aims are further connected through revisions to their internal workings: the family is turned from a mere *model* to an *instrument* of government, a means of dealing with questions of population (health, housing and education). Sovereignty becomes a double move, both a technique of political theory and an aim of improvement. The people legitimize the government, even as the government improves the people (Foucault 16-17).

Now, salvation can be made contemporary, no longer deferred for the duration. It is a bodily salvation, a promise of health, affluence and safety. The immediacy of this salvation necessitates many and varied forms of bureaucratic pastoral innovation and reformism, in areas such as policing, doctoring and mothering. And knowledge is now deployed towards twin ends. Firstly, the broad social body of the population is an object of curiosity and interrogation. It is to be measured, to be rendered calculable both in overall statistical collection and also via extrapolations from sampling. Secondly, the individual body is similarly an object of care by virtue of various forms of analysis that explain how and to what ends it is singular and how its specificities can be accounted for and tended to, even as they are put to work within a general system of social improvement (Foucault, "Subject" 784). So attempts to understand the male public mind will find "the level of wife, self and dream . . . most significant" as sources of truth (Harrisson 368). We must all confess if we are to uncover personal meaning, a truth that is trained into us as we become cultural subjects through the operation of social welfare and a training in the humanities. This is the mission of the state to "gain access to the bodies of individuals," a pre-condition of what Foucault calls "obtaining productive service from individuals" in a way that is "more efficient and less expensive" than force ("Truth and Power" 41 and 37). This mission "teaches caring as a moral disposition" (Ignatieff 68). Less poetically, we can discern a re-statement of Rousseau's insistence that citizens become "accustomed to regard their individu-

ality only in its relation to the body of the State'' in order to ensure that they ''identify themselves in some degree with this greater whole'' (135).

The Site of the Subject

This is where non-humanist bearings can be a useful corrective to celebrations of citizenship. Althusser problematizes the pre-existing foundational subject of conventional social theory (Stratton 250). What was once an ontology of the subject becomes something to be explained and situated, not uncovered as a transcendental truth. It is now conditional, dependent on the topography of the particular social surface where it resides. For Foucault: ''One has to dispense with the constituent subject . . . to attain an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within the historical texture . . . that is, a form of history which accounts for the constitution of knowledges [*savoirs*], discourses, domains of objects'' (''Truth'' 35). But unlike Foucault, Althusser situates this history of the technology of the subject within a broad social map.

He provides the following formulation of Marxism as social theory. The economic base is comprised of the productive forces and the relations of production. Its superstructure is comprised of the law and the state plus ideology, which in turn is comprised of religion, ethics and politics. One can understand the social order, then, as a place or building. Althusser develops the metaphor of base (or infrastructure, or substructure) and superstructure. This has become extremely influential, both because of its immediate analytic neatness and because certain of its tropes are shared by Althusser and Foucault, specifically Althusser's sense that ''[a] topography represents in a definite space the respective *sites* occupied by several realities'' (''Ideology'' 129 n.5). Foucault makes a metaphor of ''the site'' to found his material history of discourses (*Archaeology* 51). This sense of the site, of a social surface, is integral to the account both men give of the formation of subjectivities.

It would be spurious to seek to map Althusser onto Foucault, given the latter's attenuated relationship to Marxism. But for all the fashionable opposition of Foucault to Althusser, of relevance to obsolescence, much of the latter's work is still important, albeit at times prone to opacity, error and alienation.[2] To understand Foucault's accounts of culture and society, it is necessary both to understand how they can be constructed away from doctrines of the sovereign subject and how dialectical reasoning can be re-disposed from a single movement of history towards a site-specific analysis. Both these precepts seem to

derive from Althusser (McHugh 96). We recall here Foucault's sugges-
tion that one "open Althusser's books" and Althusser's rather sharp
contention that "[h]e was a pupil of mine," and "something from my
writings has passed into his," whilst acknowledging the specificity and
brilliance of Foucault's "own philosophical personality" (Foucault,
"The Discourse" 14 and Althusser, *For Marx* 256). Consider, for
instance, Althusser's valorization of Cremonini's depiction of the
relations between objects and "their" people. This relies on the
impossibility of absolute self-recognition and encourages a concentra-
tion on the multitude of relations that forms a historiographical appre-
hension in the viewer (Althusser, "Cremonini" 210, 213 and 218). For
Linda Hutcheon, this work of Althusser's becomes a critical influence
on postmodernist art works (108 and 133-34). Similarly, when asked his
opinion of the film of *I, Pierre Rivière*, Foucault praised the practice of
today's peasants acting the part of peasants from another historical time,
not because of some purchase on authenticity, or as a means of
perceiving one's class past. Rather, the value lay in the peasants
representing themselves and their history back to themselves ("I,
Pierre" 133-36). There is a significant link between the two men in their
views on the relations between subjects, material objects, representa-
tion, and the hermeneutic keys used to decipher these relations. Some
of this connection clearly derived from their pedagogic relationship; as
Foucault put it, "I followed" (*Remarks* 55).

Of course, there are significant differences as well. For Althusser,
the idea of philosophy is to put reality into knowledge; for Foucault, the
two are always already imbricated. Where Althusser traces a path of
investigation that goes backwards from facts to a problematic, on to an
underpinning ideology, and thence to the real, Foucault's movement
takes him from statements to their preconditions, on to a discursive
formation, and thence to the archive. These are parallel movements, but
only Althusser privileges the real as knowable and actionable despite the
lack of fit between things and words. For Foucault, language in the
contemporary world is less an unfortunate veil drawn over perfect
knowledge than a signifying system of difference and sameness that
itself decides the conditions of any inquiry after the appearance of a gap
between signs and signifiers, whilst carving out its own rental area by
inscribing the necessity of undertaking such inquiries (Brown 147-49,
151 and 156).

There is a certain happy Whiggish teleology to the personal
narrative of conversion often related by those who have travelled from
Althusser to Foucault. Where once these true believers were sidelined
in a detour of theoreticist purity, now they have renounced this unnec-

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essary move in favour of a non-conspiratorial, chaotic politics allegedly associated with Foucault. Such shifts are often also marked by the re-installation of the subject and a politics of humanistic identity. Maybe this is as much a caricature on my part as it is an enthymeme of the *conversi*. But there is a clear denial of other reasons animating this trajectory from one "dead white theorist" to another, a denial that does a particular disservice to the rejected first term in the progression.

In film theory, which I teach, it has even been claimed that we have seen a direct transition from Althusser to Foucault as providers of the discipline's "political underpinning" (Lapsley and Westlake 18). This neglects the importance, *inter alia*, of feminist psychoanalysis and post-colonialist discourse as forms of screen politics, but they, too have been subject to a Foucault-effect, and were also influenced by the Althusserian introduction to Lacan as well as Christian Metz's shift into the psy-complexes. In literature, we can see a more chaotic and compelling trajectory "simply" in work appearing under the name of Terry Eagleton. *Criticism and Ideology*, routinely held up as his Althusserian moment, contains the necessary critique of Althusser (once a sign of membership). A few years later, his survey text *Literary Theory* acknowledges the disrepute into which Althusser's work has fallen, and announces itself to be very much under the sign of Foucault. In *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, these two figures are in a still more jumbled relation (*Criticism and Ideology* 83-84, *Literary Theory* 173 and 134 and *The Ideology* 88 and 351). There is a similarly cosmic ambivalence in the practitioners of cultural studies, Stuart Hall asking almost wistfully why it became infra dig to mention Althusser "in polite socialist company in Britain" (*The Hard Road* 188). And consider Slavoj Zizek's post-Lacanian lament on these matters:

> There is something enigmatic in the sudden eclipse of   the Althusserian school: it cannot be explained away in terms of a theoretical defeat.—It is more as if it were, in Althusser's theory, a traumatic kernel which had to be quickly forgotten, "repressed"; it is an effective case of theoretical amnesia. (1)

Zizek was trying to uncover why the grand debate about the efficacy of the modern and its project of openness was being conducted via an opposition of Habermas and Foucault, thereby sublimating the unconscious. Whilst this paper is not animated by a need to identify the unsaid as a means of establishing its credentials, it is undeniably significant that Althusser's combination of anti-humanism and psycho-

analysis became the unspeakable when both those other terms carried on successful, if somewhat separate, careers.

In any case, there remains some value in Althusser's material trope of an edifice founded on the economy, above which resides the visible, diurnal operation of the social. This foundation is a bedrock which must exist for the rest of the edifice to stand, "to represent above all the 'determination in the last instance' by the economic base" ("Ideology" 130). But away from this "last instance," the superstructure has a "relative autonomy" and can even effect a "reciprocal action" onto the economy ("Ideology" 136-37). This is surely far-distant from a mechanistic Marxist functionalism incapable of discerning the nuances of cultural life or allowing for difference. We can also see some interesting links with Foucault's concern with space as a metaphor and a site. The site of concern for social theory must, for him, be on the surface. His fairly minimal and passing attention to economics made this level the most poignant in his work.

The state is a critical component of this social surface. But its meaning varies for the two theorists. In Althusser's writings, it has two chief characteristics. The first involves the use of force and its threat as a means of ensuring loyalty. This characteristic comprises the bureaucracy, the courts, the prisons, the police and the armed services, their work done by sanction and interdiction. This is "the (repressive) State apparatus" ((R)SA). The second characteristic is the "Ideological State Apparatuses" (ISAs). These include teaching and ecclesiastical institutions, the family, labour organizations, politics and the communications and cultural ISAs. So where there is a unified (R)SA, there are multifarious ISAs, many of which inhabit, at least in part, what is routinely figured as the "*private* domain." Althusser explains away these public-private distinctions as "internal to bourgeois law," law which the (R)SA is outside because it exercises a monopoly over "legitimate" force. Violence is the essence of the (R)SA, whereas ISAs "*function by ideology.*" Ideology may inform the (R)SA, but it is not as important as force. The ISAs may in their turn use force, but it will always be secondary to ideology as an influence on them (Althusser, "Ideology" 130).

We might return briefly here to the question of conversion and the autobiography of ideas, to the case of Stuart Hall. It is somewhat ironic that Hall's critiques of Althusser for functionalism, and Foucault for a "gospel of absolute diversity," are set so close together (Hall, "The Toad in the Garden" 46-48, 52). Perhaps this occurs because there is a methodological kernel of contradiction in Althusser—that we are all caught in ideology, that ideology is essential as a grout cementing

societies into security, *and* that there is an antinomy to ideology, going under the name of science—which is brought out when read against the detailed historical specificity, and rejection of a non-signifying ground of truth, offered by Foucault.

Jim Collins argues that whilst Foucault's account of power emphasizes a dispersal of power and counter-power, its best evocation—the use of Bentham's panoptic fantasy as a synecdoche for relations of power-operates via the same centralized notion of a cultural apparatus as the ISA model: susceptible to contradiction, but highly organized as well (28-29). This can be made to meet Anthony Giddens' contention that the essence of modernity is the organization by the social system of ''time and space'' through culture (14). Hence my use of the term ''surface'' even as the metaphor of base and superstructure is mobilized. This then provides the means for conceptualizing the circulation of discourses and the formation of subjectivities within the sphere of governance in a way that can position such practices sometimes alongside capital and its critical economic role and sometimes quite separate from it. This serves to keep a hold on *meta-récits* whilst enlisting Foucault to make them serviceable. My own view is that the antithesis set up between Foucault and Marx is spurious, based as it must be upon a conventionalist understanding of author-functions. Which Marx and which Foucault can thus be opposed? For example, Foucault drew extensively from Marx in his ideas about harnessing productivity and the construction of homologies between military and civic training (''docile bodies''), where the division of labour is compared with the organization of infantrymen. *Discipline and Punish* has many Marxist features in its model of the development of disciplinary power inside capitalism. Foucault's principal quibble with Marx and the true believers lay in their propensity to devote untold energy to conceptualizing ''class'' to the comparative exclusion of an adequate theorization of ''struggle''; he complained that this second half of the grand dialectical couplet received less than equal treatment. And for all these thinkers, the problem with the public-private divide remains critical. The divide is so important because it affords the state the task of policing the ownership of property and the management of people (Foucault, *Discipline* 163, 169, 175 and 221-23; Foucault, ''The End'' 154; and Balibar, ''Tais-Toi'' 2). This is increasingly significant given the methodological and political individualism of the rational consumer side to both the revived interest in citizenship and neo-classical economics. But even these discourses form the public in accordance with their own logics of subjectivity. Foucault's legacy is to show that the best means of understanding such kinds is not to compare them with the

overall performance of accumulating capital, but to consider them as rules that are deployed as a means of managing populations.

Foucault sees a grievous reductionism in Marxist accounts of the subject. Subjection may be occasioned by the circumstances of production, class or ideology, but this is not to state that these are always and everywhere the ''more fundamental mechanisms.'' He argues instead for a circularity in their relationship to modes of subjection, referring to the increase in size and reach of the political domain of governance over the past five hundred years. The success of the state's attempts to manage populations is seen to derive from two sources. The *loci* and logic of its power are not merely to be found amongst the interests or persuasions of the class that controls it because it operates at a micro level as well as at the totalizing level of general economic forces (''Subject'' 782). This micro level depends upon the formation of various kinds of public subject. The determining logics of those subjects may not necessarily provide intelligible accounts of action if they are always led back to the economic. In fact, the path of research that works with ideology may be said to pre-suppose the conventional idealist subject of philosophy imbued with a consciousness ready to be worked on (''Body'' 58).

Foucault stresses the importance of distinguishing between relations of power, relations of communication, and ''objective capacities.'' Power transforms the material world. Communication gives that world meaning through semiotic exchange. And the ''capacities'' decide inequality and domination. Each is mutually imbricated with the others, but not in a coordinated or consistent way that would make for an equilibrium. Different sites will have different points to their connection. Each sphere frequently operates by its own rules and regularities (''Subject'' 786-87 and ''Questions'' 5).

Other developments since Althusser have problematized his findings about who controls the apparatuses of the state and whose interests they serve. The category of class may no longer be serviceable. Leaving to one side alternative accounts of class, derived from self-apportionment of attributes through questionnaire sociology or position within the labour market, the Marxist tradition itself offers discontinuities in this area (for non-Marxist accounts, see Inkeles 83-86, and Weber 180-81). There is a division between those with property and those without; between those with power or authority and those without; between those with control of the forces of production (technology) and those without; and between persons in differing relationships to a shifting set of processes of the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus value. It is difficult to find agreement within or between these positions

(Resnick and Wolff 2-4). And it is also increasingly awkward to use class as a category of identifiable agency. How does a class "act"?

John Rosenthal tries to recuperate class by arguing that it is quite different from a signifier that can be read against a signified in the material world. His counter-example is women in a gendered discourse. Unlike this subject position, he argues, class is a rather crudely theoretical object that does not refer so straightforwardly to a felt social identity (30-31). Taking up his point, we might re-dispose the difficulty with class onto the broader terrain of signification in order to break open these categories and indicate how they might be used methodologically rather than organically.

Consider this alongside Althusser's account of ideology as "*a 'Representation' of the Imaginary Relationship of Individuals to their Real Conditions of Existence*" ("Ideology" 152). He maintains that criticizing an ideology, for example religious faith, also presumes that this ideology is illusionary but that it at least alludes to reality. It must, therefore, have grounds that are both true and germane to itself on which it can be criticized: "(ideology = *illusion/allusion*)." The next presumption is that the act of interpretation can explain this ("Ideology" 153).

Althusser argues that this practice gives rise to a query as to the sources and reasons for the "imaginary transposition of the real conditions of existence." For such a practice of interpretation assumes that:

> what is reflected in the imaginary representation of the world found in an ideology is the conditions of existence of men, i.e. their real world ... [when] it is not their real conditions of existence, their real world that "men" "represent to themselves" in ideology, but above all it is their relation to those conditions of existence represented to them there. ("Ideology" 153-54)

This suggests that ideas are material practices, rituals such as the act of prayer (material faith in religion) or the payment of a social debt (material faith in justice), carried out by the subject at the same time as they define that subject. The subject is both hailing and being hailed through this set of practices ("Ideology" 158, 160, and 162-64). Not all the practices need be compatible, but this may not be a problem unless they come into conflict.

The separation of potentially conflictual spheres, each of which may be necessary for the constitution of the ethical subject of liberal-capitalist citizenship and the maximising subject of the free market, involves a further move, the emergence of a smaller unit of analysis than

the ISA, but one that helps to constitute it. This is what Foucault terms "those systems of micro-power that . . . we call the disciplines." Liberties and disciplines are the dual inheritance of the Enlightenment, whereby the subjection of "forces and bodies" must accompany the guarantees of sovereignty. Far from being antithetical to them, "[m]echanisms of power" accompany and even guarantee freedoms (*Discipline* 222). Power may silence at times, but it also hails, articulates and commands speech. It works to produce truths. It is through the training or schooling of the subject achieved under the agency of disciplines, for example, that the subject is known (170). Similar methods produce a "will to knowledge" (*History* 73). The appearance of categories of person produced by forms of knowledge ("the child, the patient, the madman, the prisoner") divides people, making them the object of understandings that slice them into interiors, exteriors and avenues into and out of cohorts. This achievement is to be seen under the sign of a "technology of power," a productive manufacturer of truth: "[t]he individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production" (*History* 192 and 194). So the state, while existing in a definite structural relationship to citizens, governments, markets and the distinctions between these groupings, operates through the work of differing knowledges. This is Jacques Donzelot's "provisional bracketing" of "state" with "power." Neither exists other than relationally, as productive forces doing the work of "activating and managing a population" (76-77).

This understanding is in stark contrast to the two standard logics of the state. The social compact and functionalist views argue for a unified subject placing sovereignty in it because of a perceived "community of interest" (Hindess and Hirst 31). Neo-Marxist accounts, in some sense after Althusser, see the state as a set of fractions ultimately (but not essentially) dedicated to protecting capital accumulation (Head 41-42). Both discourses are totalizing, one in its mythic first instance (the signing over of sovereignty) and the other in its mythic last instance (the servicing of capital). Neither discourse pays sufficient attention to the formation of subjects or the politics of culture, despite the fact that Althusser pointed in that direction. Rather, the trend is towards accounting for the state as a mechanism that elicits obedience from pre-existing social actors, and social actors as possessed of pre-significatory interests (even if these are not always self-evident) (McQuarie and Spaulding 6).

For Bertrand de Jouvenel, the essence of the state is power (27). This power is akin to Bertrand Russell's "production of intended effects" (35). Conversely, for pluralist political science "[t]he power

relation is give-and-take'' (Lasswell 10). In most such theorizing, power is positioned in antinomic relation to knowledge, distorting the flow of information (Converse 1-9). The self-styled *Radical View* of Steven Lukes finds that notions of power and the subject are all about interests. He proposes a final and conclusive level of its operation when ''A exercises power over B in a manner contrary to B's interests'' (34). Power thus offers a unifier for discourses of state and subject, promising their union and difference a mutual solidity. Power is produced here as a property (Ragins and Sundstrom 51). But it is possible to re-phrase the state and power as productive processes, fundamentally unfixed and relational in their circulation.

The Postmodern Cultural Subject

Just such a re-phrasing became a critical issue amongst the Parisian intellectual left in surveying the detritus of *les événements*. For Althusser, May 1968 initially seemed to point to the need for a rigorous intellectual leadership inside Marxism. Whereas for Foucault, as for the social movements that organised in its afterglow, the period spelt an end to the vanguard role of the general intellectual, much as modernity had for Simmel (Lapsley and Westlake 21). The question *cui bono* was displaced by *qui parle*. Aspects of that question are re-conceived by Foucault as ''superstructural in relation to a whole series of power networks that invest the body, sexuality, the family, knowledge, technology and so forth'' (*Discipline* 39). No central field functions as a coherent whole determining society. There are not so much determining interests as determining formations of interests and subjects to have them. Interests, then, are epiphenomenal to the lines of power that form them. In reading the shifting *loci* of power at different sites, Foucault chooses not to seek:

> the headquarters that presides over its rationality; neither the caste which governs, nor those who make the most important economic decisions which direct the entire network of power that functions in a society (and makes *it* function); the rationality of power is characterized by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level where they are inscribed. (*History* 95)

The discursive tactics of cultural policy, for example, will frequently be founded on accounts of subjectivity, of how to produce civil subjects. And the realm for so doing will be that of conduct, which must mean culture if it means more than force. This returns us to Althusser's

anti-idealist account of culture *as practice*, where, to repeat, the physical, material act of prayer actually constitutes belief. There is literally nothing below or above it. The logics and *loci* of power are here plural and often discrete, their rationality self-referential and restricted to particular inscriptive systems as means of keeping incommensurate accounts of the subject apart. Power is, then, not so much John Frow's "consolidation of production of all speech" ("Discourse and Power" 206). Rather, it is the consolidation *and* dislocation of specific forms of speech at specific times. Power produces meanings in a decentred way. It demolishes at certain points and constructs at others because its burden is to engineer relations between subjects (Foucault, "Subject" 786). The primary site of this engineering is at the level of governance through culture. But culture has been the very domain of significatory confusion and indeterminacy under modernity, with its distinctive invention of the hermeneutic drive to find instability of meaning even as fixity is desired. Under postmodernity, with the economy and culture integrated still more intimately and liberal/capitalism (nascent or in restoration) in search of actionable technologies to elicit civility, a new subject is to be formed with an urgency that cannot permit endless, or even minimally delayed, iterability.

The terrain of meaning that forms the domain of culture has undergone significant epistemological and institutional changes over time. Foucault has systematized the question of the connection between discourse and object in the following terms:

> There is a problem: how can it happen that real things, things that are perceived, can come to be articulated by words within a discourse. Is it that words impose on us the outline of things, or is it that things, through some operation of the subject, come to be transcribed on the surface of words[?] ("Archeology" 51)

For governments, posing the problem of meaning in this way is to train their subjects into an aestheticized politics of civic identity. We are prone to conceive of cultural interpretation in terms of a nineteenth-century desire to counteract the anomic, alienating tendencies of industrial society that divided human subjects into specialisms, into units of work. This sets the humanities and aesthetics in opposition to the vocationalism of the modern, which is seen as a termite-like reaction to the problem of the ineffability of the urban sublime. But perhaps the displacement of classics by the humanities in the curriculum—a central aspect to modernity—established the parameters of a training in contemporary civics rather more than it provoked the re-appearance of

a unified subjectivity (Hunter 442-43). The desire to engage in a processual system for generating public goodwill was tied from that moment to cultural criticism's propensity for generating endless meaningfulness in texts. This may be seen to have produced a model for communicative rationality between readers. Whether or not Habermas' association of the free citizen functioning in an ideal speech act ever existed materially, its existence as knowledge functions in a formative way, troped again and again in the discourses of liberalism and citizenship. This troping is more than political philosophy, especially in countries that have already industrialized and are moving into service industry phases even as the emotional labour component of their economies is so lacking from everyday conduct. It provides the foundation for the form of pedagogic enlightenment that bureaucracies increasingly engage in, for the production of educational and other cultural policies that claim to manufacture self-discovery, autonomy and identification; in short, for instruments that take the absence of an *originating* subject as an unspoken given and shore up the state by forming a *governable* subject whose individuality is given through coordinates that work for liberal capitalism. This is done in the name of the apparently transcendental subject whose free will is magically always there but magically has to be formed and re-formed time after time, a move that is close to Kierkegaard's frustrations about the discursive power of doctrines of:

> "the public," consisting of real individuals who never are and never can be united in an actual situation or organization—and yet are held together as a whole. The public is a host, more numerous than all the peoples together, but it is a body which can never be reviewed; it cannot even be represented. (265)

Cultural policy exists to confirm what is apparently already there. Social engineering becomes social conservation. But there is a contradiction. Whilst postmodernity may be "defined entirely by absences," it calls up a sense of loss of something never had (Bauman 793-94). This leads to a plenitude of representations—and hence formations—of publics and their appropriate conduct. The postmodern acts in the name of the ontic despite the fact that it has substituted for the latter (Brown 188-97). For the postmodern is nostalgic for a historically ramified and derived meaning (Huyssen 613). Ironically, this means that, at the level of policy, the state is enabled to instantiate the new as the already extant, precisely by virtue of what Fredric Jameson calls "an age that has forgotten how to think historically" (ix). Foucault historicizes and

renders specific the varied levels of determination that are coming to organize these new social structures.

In his rather wistful meditation on Althusser's passing (admittedly, one in a long line of summative accounts by male academics that fail to mention Althusser's murder of his wife), Ted Benton makes some extremely valuable points about Althusser as a counterforce to dogma. This may appear strange to people reared on a heritage of British or Australian social theory in particular, where teenage Althusserians were long regarded as Young Turks in search of flesh to consume. But there is a kernel of truth in the statement. By the late 1970s, Althusser knew that any hope for a science of Marxism could not be sustained under the existing apparatus of State Socialism. And more than that, he was pointing to the beginnings of a restive civil society in the Eastern bloc (117-23). But he also knew that every social formation required "a distinctive kind of *cement* that assures the adjustment and cohesion of men in their roles, their functions and their social relations" (Althusser, "Theory, Theoretical Practice and Theoretical Formation" 25). A revised Althusserian framework that borrows in a non-mechanistic way from his account of the subject, the site and the state can help us to re-think our present past and re-think the foundational myth of the social contract. 1989 marked the death of State Socialism, not the theory of the subject that Althusser ushered in and Foucault fleshed out.

Notes

1. Some parts of this argument appear in *The Well-Tempered Self: Citizenship, Culture, and the Postmodern Subject*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1993.

2. A representative critique from within sociology is contained in R. W. Connell, 98-139. For summations of the intersection of Althusser and screen theory, see Robert Lapsley and Michael Westlake, 13-18 and Dudley Andrew, 118-19. The continuing influence is traced and exemplified in the domain of literature in John Frow, *Marxism and Literary History*, 22-35. The use of interpellation is also in evidence in John Fiske, 176-78.

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